



## New and noteworthy at the 45th Festival

The Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival is 45 years young. This year's special offerings demonstrate its vitality. Here are a few highlights.

- To celebrate its 40th anniversary, the Natural Colored Wool Growers Association is holding its national show at the Festival, and they are also the 2018 Featured Breed. Visit the Featured Breed Tent to see and purchase creations made with natural colored fiber, meet and greet breeders (Friday), bid on silent auction items, and listen to Sunday's speaker, doctoral student Chris Posbergh, discuss his research: "Making Moorit: Determining the Molecular Basis for Brown Colored Sheep."
- The National Lincoln Show and Sale will be part of the All Breeds Sheep Show and Sale. This is a opportunity to buy quality Lincoln sheep.
- Almost 40 head of sheep will be offered in the All Breeds Sheep Sale on Saturday evening, including white and natural colored Romneys, white Lincolns, colored Lincolns, Merinos,

*Valais Blacknose genetics come to the United States, and to the Breed Display at the Festival.*



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### Free Festival admission for MSBA Members

Members' names will be on a "will call" list at the main gate. Up to two adults from each farm/family will be allowed in for free.

natural colored fine/medium, and Karakuls. There will be a pre-sale show at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, which is free and open to the public. View the complete sale catalog at <http://www.bannersheepmagazine.com/salecatalogs/2018/Maryland-Catalog-4-18.pdf>.

- Free Shepherd Seminars will be offered on Saturday in the Dining Hall. From 1:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m., Dr. Rosalind Hain will discuss Over-the-counter (OTC) Medications & Treatments for Sheep: When and How to Use Which Ones. From 3 to 4 p.m., John Fichtner, a hill shepherd from Gay, West Virginia, invites you to a "Shepherd's Chat," to learn about his regenerative approach to shepherding: raising animals in concert with environmental balance.
- There will be expanded cooking and cheese-making demonstrations this year in the Big Tent in the Festival Farm Market, located just inside the main gate. A special guest will be Chef David Kane from Asheville, North Carolina, executive chef and head butcher with Foothills Local Meats, a company devoted to utilizing whole animals sourced exclusively from local pastures. Check the sign board outside the tent for demonstration times. Alicia Clugh of the Maryland Cheese Guild will present Cheesemaking Demonstrations in the Home Arts Building on Saturday at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- The historic John C. Campbell Folk School of Brasstown, North Carolina, will be on hand this year offering demonstrations in spinning,

*(continued on page 14)*

Newsletter of the  
**MARYLAND  
SHEEP BREEDERS  
ASSOCIATION**

SPRING 2018

**Banner image:** Cavey Family Montadales on an emerald spring pasture.

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# President's Message

**Lee Langstaff**  
*MSBA President*

I don't know about you, but I find that at different times of the year I feel differently about my sheep. I think it has to do with the different management activities required over the course of a year that make different characteristics emerge as most noticeable. I've been skirting fleeces recently, and find myself falling in love with my sheep all over again. As I spend 20–30 minutes on each fleece, I get to thinking about a particular sheep and how well she or he is fulfilling their role in the flock. I'm pretty happy with most of them.

But at lambing time my perspective may change. That's when we interact most closely with our sheep. For me, this is when I get a really good idea of the individual personalities of our ewes, that translate into varying management needs. Some get noticeably calmer and friendlier, some get crazier, and some get downright belligerent or demanding.

My criteria for evaluating how much I like a particular animal leans a little away from my primary goals of producing spectacular fleeces and excellent carcass traits, and more towards how easy or difficult they are to manage through lambing. Sometimes I rage at one or another of them, but always feel the futility of doing so.

Of course it has zero effect on the sheep in question, which is a good thing since it means they take no offense (I'm pretty sure if I spoke to my dog that way, she would judge me). Sometimes I literally beg them to help me help them through a difficult lambing—when they seem to be doing everything they can to make it harder.



And then there are the ones who actually seem to know that you are helping, and you get into an almost profound groove of joint endeavor with a ewe in a tough spot and it's immensely fulfilling and gratifying. It doesn't seem important anymore that their fleece isn't your favorite or they are croupy or a little down in the pasterns.

Then it's shearing time. This is when your favorite sheep – the one with perfect conformation, perfect fleece, great genetics and friendly, docile personality – turns into a monster. She's outraged at being handled for shearing and now your shearer is the one using bad words and suggesting you cull this one. Your favorite sheep is embarrassing, even humiliating you, and you never—really NEVER—want your shearer to dislike your sheep!

Of course there's also the sheep that makes managing the whole flock much more difficult than it needs to be—the non-conformist. She's the one whose suspicious nature is stronger than her flocking instinct. The one who holds back when the rest of the flock is moving where you want them to, and who causes all the others to all-of-a-sudden question their decision to stay with the flock. They scatter.

She does it every time. You cannot catch her. She makes you crazy and you call her names. You think: She's got to go. But, she has a great fleece, twins every year, is a great mother, and is beautifully put together. Argh!

There are endless examples of these inharmonious encounters and thought processes that are an inherent part of what we experience as shepherds. You try to make good business decisions, but these living creatures reach into you in un-businesslike ways. So, as I skirt my fleeces, I am contemplating and acknowledging how living with and managing these animals – who are unwaveringly honest and true to their evolution—affect different dimensions of my life.

I learn from them—about myself as well as about them. They enrich me aesthetically, intellectually, and physically. They connect me to history and to others who share sheep and wool interests. Overall, I think they make me a better person. They make us a community.

I'm looking forward to the greatest event that brings us all together to celebrate all things sheep and wool: the 45th Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival!

I hope to see you there!

*Hoping you will grow up to be a prize winner, not a troublemaker!*

Through the American Sheep Industry Association, a Sheep Heritage Foundation Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$3,000 is being made available for sheep-related graduate studies. The scholarship is for the advancement of the sheep industry, lamb and wool, through financial support of a graduate-level (M.S. or Ph.D.) student who is attending a school in the United States.

## Sheep grad scholarship available

Applicant requirements include:

- Be a graduate student involved in sheep and/or wool research in such areas as animal science, agriculture economics, or veterinary medicine with proof of graduate school acceptance

- complete an application, and
- present two letters of reference.

The application deadline is May 31, 2018. The recipient will be notified in June 2018.

The application can be downloaded at <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https://dlcqrq366w3ike.cloudfront.net/http/DOCUMENT/SheepUSA/ASI%20memorial%20scholarship%20application.doc>.



The Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program is accepting grant applications from graduate students.

Grants are open to any graduate student enrolled at an accredited college, university, or veterinary school located in the Northeast region.

## More grad scholarships

Applications should address issues of

current or potential importance to Northeast farmers and the agricultural community including, but not limited to, cropping systems, pest management, livestock health, social sustainability on the farm, soil quality, farm energy production, farm labor, urban agriculture, and the marketing of local food. Reviewers look for projects that explore one or more of the sustainable agriculture themes of good stewardship, profitability, and quality of life for farmers and the farm community. Examples of previously funded projects may be found at: [www.northeastare.org/sample/graduate](http://www.northeastare.org/sample/graduate).

Awards are capped at \$15,000. Applications are due by May 8, 2018.



Your sheep still need scrapie tags, but as the eradication program advances (it's working—we're eradicating scrapie in the United States!) the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) no longer supplies free plastic tags.

You can order those from a list of approved suppliers (see [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/sheep-and-goat-health/national-scrapie-eradication-program/CT\\_To\\_Order\\_Ear\\_Tags](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/sheep-and-goat-health/national-scrapie-eradication-program/CT_To_Order_Ear_Tags)).

You can still get the metal tags free (but you might want to ask your shearer about that).

If you live in Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, or Virginia, contact Chris Helbig, USDA APHIS Office, Richmond, Virginia, 1-804-343-2569. Have your 5-digit APHIS farm number, and the number on the last tag you have, at hand.

## Scrapie tags: the new drill



### ASI Convention presentations

Presentations made at the 2018 American Sheep Industry Convention in San Antonio are available at [http://sheepusa.org/Events\\_2018Convention](http://sheepusa.org/Events_2018Convention).

This is a partial list:

- National Scrapie Eradication Program Update
- Mycoplasma Ovis Research
- Research Updates on Malignant Catarrhal Fever
- Footvax Use in the United States
- Innovations in Parasite Research
- NWRC - Predator Research Facility Update - Livestock Working Dogs
- Evaluation of Three Maternal Lines Under Pasture Management
- Increasing Ewe Production Efficiency: Leveraging Ewe Lambs to Increase Flock Lambing Rates
- Update on Marketing Wool Domestically and Internationally
- Raw Wool Services Update
- Nourish With Lamb - 2018 Nutrition Education Program

- Wool: From Fiber to Fashion
- Responsibility in Wool Production Update
- Retailers Expectations of Lamb
- Wool: The "New" Performance Fiber
- Genetic Trends Over Time with Breeds on NSIP
- Livestock Protection Dog Update
- State of Objective Measurement Industry (Fiber)
- Lamb Quality / Flavor Research
- Farm to Feet
- Crossbreeding to Improve Productivity
- Social Networking and Your Flock

*Farm to Feet: all-American recipe: U.S. materials, U.S. manufacturing, and U.S. workers.*





Image by Barbara Klein, of Nancy Cox Starkey's Kep

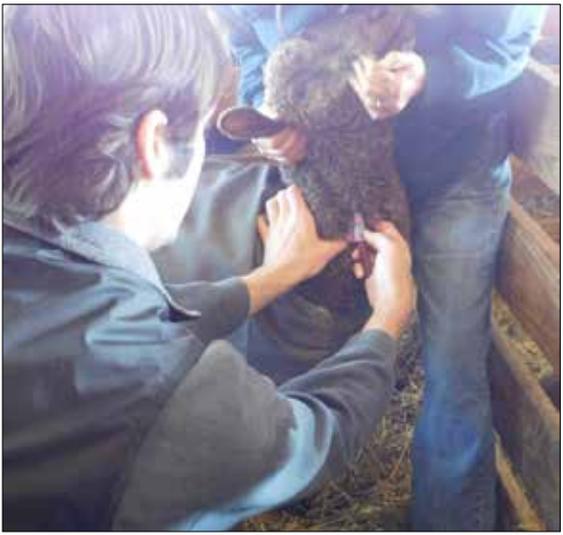
# Management

## Making Moorit: Uncovering the DNA changes responsible for creating brown sheep

**Christian Posbergh**

*is a doctoral candidate at Cornell University. He will give a talk on his colored genetics research at 11 a.m. Sunday in the Featured Breed Tent, sponsored by the Natural Colored Wool Growers Association.*

*Posbergh takes a blood sample for genetic testing at the 2016 Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival.*



While it has been known that brown is recessive to black in most sheep breeds, the specific DNA change responsible has not been discovered. This is what a crowd-funded research project at Cornell University set out to change (experiment.com/moorit-sheep). Through the gracious donations from shepherds, genetics enthusiasts, and other contributors, we performed DNA sequencing of the TYRP1 gene in several sheep breeds to identify the mutations responsible for brown coat color.

First, a little genetics background: Every sheep has two copies of chromosomes (26 pairs plus X and Y) which are composed of DNA in specific sequences of A's, C's, T's, & G's. On these chromosomes are genes which can be transcribed and translated into proteins. Each gene can have multiple versions or choices, which are known as alleles. This genetic code contributes to what we see expressed in the animal, also known as the phenotype. So, to recap: all our sheep have 26 pairs of chromosomes, which contain genes that code proteins, and those affect how we see the animal perform; at each gene different alleles can be present (but at most two in a single individual).

Now back to this project. Building on studies in dogs, mice, and pigs, we decided to sequence a gene called Tyrosinase Related Protein 1 (TYRP1). In these other species, mutations within TYRP1 were found to associate with brown versus black coat color. TYRP1 is located on ovine chromosome 2. Using an online genome browser, just like Google maps but for genomes, we can pinpoint and "see" where a particular gene lies on the chromosome. We plugged in the "address" of TYRP1 and designed "primers" (short sequences of DNA) around specific parts of TYRP1. The seven parts we focused on are the exons, which

will be translated from DNA into the TYRP1 protein. These primers are used to amplify the DNA sequence at specific points in the genome, allowing us to identify variation that may be there.

We sourced samples from quite a few flocks and across many breeds that have moorit present including Finnsheep, Icelandics, natural colored fine wools, Shetlands, Romneys, and Romeldales. We amplified the TYRP1 exons to determine if any mutations within TYRP1 associated with brown coat color. From this initial sequencing, we identified two promising DNA mutations.

The first was a mutation in exon 3, changing G base pair to a T. This exon 3 mutation causes an amino acid change from cysteine to phenylalanine, affecting the final protein composition. This mutation was previously associated with light and dark morphs in the wild Soay sheep on the island of St. Kilda. The other mutation located in exon 4 results in a C to T base pair change. This change introduces a premature stop codon halfway in the TYRP1 protein, effectively reducing the final size of the protein by half!

We genotyped both mutations in 486 sheep. We found the exon 3 mutation (exon 3 genotype TT) associated with brown color in Finnsheep and natural colored fine-wools. While the exon 4 mutation (exon 4 genotype TT) is associated with brown color in Shetlands and Icelandics, the Romeldales and Romneys proved to be a little more difficult.

The "ram" breeds carried both mutations in brown individuals. While this may seem confusing at first, all it means is there are more genotype combinations possible in Romneys and Romeldales that result in brown color. A brown animal in these breeds could be either of these three genotypes (exon 3 genotype, exon 4 genotype): 1. TT GG or 2. CC TT or 3. CT GT. In Finns and fine-wools it should be TT GG, and in Icelandics/Shetlands it should be CC TT.

No matter what genotype a brown sheep has, it needs to have two altered copies of TYRP1 to have brown coat color. Those of you familiar with dog genetics will know this is the same way TYRP1 mutations cause brown in a variety of dog breeds. More research is needed to determine if these mutations differ in the lightness or darkness of moorit that is expressed.

We also tested these mutations in Jacob sheep as validation samples, since there has been no documented moorit in this breed. They all came back with black non-carrier genotypes (CC GG). We also tested California Red and Tunis sheep

to see if these mutations were responsible for the characteristic red color seen in these breeds. All our "red" individuals, however, came back CC GG, meaning neither of these mutations are responsible for red.

A few disclaimers for this project:

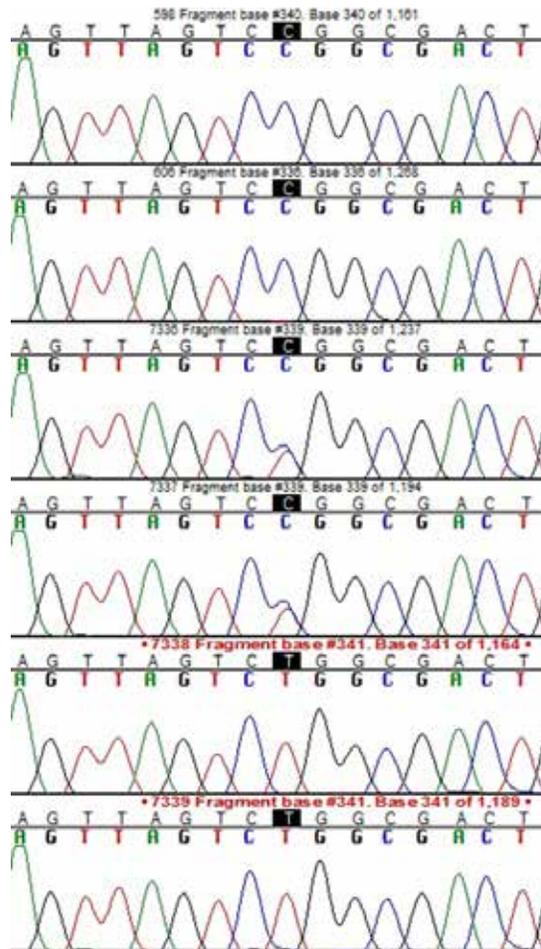
- TYRP1 could still harbor mutations causing red but we have not sequenced the whole gene to search for possible variation responsible for red.
- There could be other mutations (both in and out of TYRP1) responsible for brown outside of our study population, but hopefully these two mutations are responsible for most brown sheep.
- As of this writing there is no commercial lab offering the tests for these markers. The lab I am part of now is exclusively a research lab at an academic university.

So to sum up, we found two mutations in TYRP1 that appear to be responsible for brown color in sheep. These tools can allow shepherds to more accurately breed for moorit fleeces and better meet their target fleece markets.

Moving forward, I recently received a grant to perform whole genome sequencing to identify genomic variation responsible for differences we see in our natural colored sheep. I am currently in the process of choosing which samples to send in collaboration with some other sheep genetics enthusiasts to get the most bang for our buck. This research will seek to identify variation due to the Agouti locus (which controls the amount and distribution of eumelanin [brown/black] and pheomelanin [yellow/red] pigmentation) and potentially spotting, but that's a subject for another day. Ideally, I'll be able to report on those results in a year's time, as I am defending my Ph.D.

While sheep coat color is one my favorite subjects, my other projects involve identifying genomic variation responsible for aseasonality, mature body size, growth, hyperbilirubinemia (an inherited liver disease) and photosensitivity, and dairy traits in sheep. If anyone has questions about this specific research, my other research, or just wants to talk sheep genetics, I can be contacted at [cjp98@cornell.edu](mailto:cjp98@cornell.edu).

*The next research chapter: identifying variations (there are a few!) at the Agouti locus.*



*This electropherogram allows us to visualize the DNA base pairs and identify variation in our samples. It shows what homozygotes and carriers look like in sequencing results. The different colors represent different nucleotides. Each row is a different animal; when we align them we can genotype our samples at particular sites.*



*Top, a moorit individual and fleece samples; bottom, a black individual (with sunbleached tips) and fleece samples.*



## Management ▶

# Romanovs: A prolific wool breed

**Rosalind Hain**

*is an MSBA board member  
who raises Romanovs,  
Texels, and crosses near  
Frederick*

Romanovs are one of two breeds most associated with high prolificacy (the other being Finnish Landrace). The record is nine live lambs, but three to five is more common for mature ewes.

The breed—a pure one, not a composite of other breeds—was first developed in the vicinity of a 14th century Russian town of the same name, along the river Volga. The first importation into the Western Hemisphere was into Canada in 1980, and later into the United States.

I came to raise Romanovs by way of my father, who has raised them for 15 years. They tend to be pretty friendly ewes and are easier for me (as a small-framed person) to handle. I began with 11 ewes and a ram from my father's flock

Romanovs, in addition to producing multiple lamb crops, are polyestrous—and year-round breeding makes them an ideal choice for an intensive production program, and a more continuous supply of lambs.

Ewes are known for ease of lambing and generally don't need assistance. Lambs are incredibly vital at birth. Most ewes can raise three to four lambs by themselves, but for larger litters, intensive management with milk supplementation or bottle raising is necessary.

So far, my largest litter was five lambs, with the smallest weighing in at not quite three pounds. But these lambs hit the ground running with a will to live and thrive.

Romanovs are primarily a meat-type sheep—but with a difference. The meat is lean and mild; the breed carries fat internally around the kidneys, instead of as back fat (similar to goats).

The breed tends to have a smaller frame, with mature ewes topping out at about 100 pounds. Market lambs are finished at about 80 pounds,

making them ideal for the ethnic market and certain restaurant markets.

Rate of gain varies, depending on management, but can be as high as a pound per day.

In the United States, Romanovs tend to be used as a maternal line, crossed with a heavier muscled breed to increase carcass quality of lambs. And they are valued for the increase in prolificacy they pass on; they are a popular cross for productive breeding flocks.

Crossbred ewes tend to produce twins or triplets, and generally raise them unassisted. Several of my first ewes were crossbreds. I also have Texels, and the Romanov-Texel ewes are super chill—and built like tanks. Their market lambs bring me more muscle at market time.

Today much current research on sheep production in the United States is being done at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center (MARC) in Clay Center, Nebraska. Romanovs feature prominently in that research.

Early research presented at a recent American Sheep Industry Association convention showed that half Romanov, quarter White Dorper, quarter Katahdin ewes raised 20–38 pounds more lambs per weight at 20 weeks when compared to Katahdin and Polypay ewes.

Other recent MARC research includes the sequencing of the genome of 96 rams from nine major sheep breeds (including that of 10 Romanovs); that information is available at a relatively easy-to-use website (<https://www.ars>).



*Romanov fiber was featured in the 1997 Peace Fleece project; the Russian-grown wool was made into felted baby booties called valienki. [Image from [http://www.peacefleece.com/Time\\_Line.htm](http://www.peacefleece.com/Time_Line.htm)]*



*Right: a Romanov ewe and crossbred lamb. Far right: a Romanov ram. [Images courtesy Rosalind Hind]*

usda.gov/plains-area/clay-center-ne/marc/wgs/oviref/).

So far, that research has identified three genes that affect litter size, with 14 known coding variances. Previously, only one gene variant was known (in Finn sheep). Recently two variants on gene BMP15 were found in Dorsets and Dorpers, and two more variants were noted on gene BMPR1B in Katahdins, Romanovs, and Finns.

Science continues to reveal the genetic treasures present in Romanovs and other breeds. Learn more about ongoing research into sheep productivity genetics by following the below links.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanov\\_sheep](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanov_sheep)

<https://www.narsa-us.com/romanov-characteristics.html>

<https://www.ars.usdagovresearch/publications/publication/?seqNo115=350968>

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publication/?seqNo115=343840>



The University of Maryland Cooperative Extension presents its fourth Twilight Tour & Tasting from 4 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 13, at the Washington County Agricultural Education Center in Boonsboro. The event will showcase all the products and services that small ruminants (sheep and goats) provide: meat, dairy, fiber, and vegetation control.

**Twilight tour to feature all good things from small ruminants**

Arik Mills from Rik's Cafe in Hagerstown will be the featured chef. Participants will have the

opportunity to sample dishes made from lamb and chevon (goat meat). They will be able to sample cheese made from sheep and goat milk.

There will be a fiber demonstration and information presented about using small ruminants to control unwanted vegetation. The event will include wine tasting and a discussion of matching wines with meat and cheese. Wagon tours of the sheep research

program at the adjacent Western Maryland Research & Education Center will be conducted.

Pre-registration is required. The registration deadline is June 1. The cost of participation is \$10 per person. Children under the age of 10 will be admitted free. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-twilight-tour-tasting-tickets-43760653292>.

If you need assistance to participate, please contact Susan Schoenian or Pam Thomas with the University of Maryland Extension at 301-432-2767 at least two weeks prior to the activity date.



*Sheep or goat cheeses, anyone?*

**4TH ANNUAL MARYLAND SHEEP & WOOL FESTIVAL ALL BREEDS SALE**

**Featuring NATIONAL ROMNEY SHOW & SALE**  
**Howard County Fairgrounds • West Friendship, MD**

**SHOW: Friday, May 5 • 7 PM SALE: Saturday, May 6 • 6 PM**  
**JUDGE: Brian Faris, TX AUCTIONEER: Terry Jacobs, MD**



Champion Lincoln & Top-Selling  
\$1250 Ewe, Sold to J&D Fattoria, MD



Pine Lane Farm, MI Champion Karakul Ewe  
Sold for \$400 to Yahya Dogru, NJ





Little Hooves Romneys, NJ Champion Natural Colored Ewe, Sold to Sabrina Chester, VA for \$625



Mendenhall Wool Ranch, CA Champion Merino Ewe, Sold to Morgan & Anna Lawther, OH for \$500

**Yearling Ewes • Fall Ewe Lambs • Spring Ewe Lambs • Rams**  
*(to sell a ram, you must enter 2 ewes)*

See the complete sale catalog online and in the April Banner!



**Banner**  
Sale Management Service

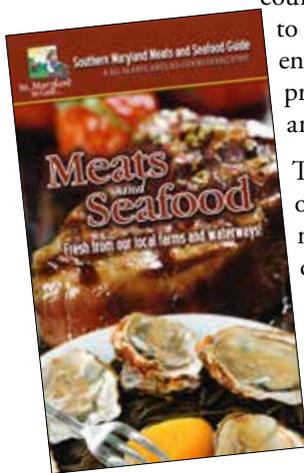
**Local Contact:**  
Mara Mullinix, DVM  
301/865-4224

**P.O. Box 500**  
Cuba, IL 61427  
309/785-5058

[www.bannersheepmagazine.com](http://www.bannersheepmagazine.com)



## Cooperative marketing for meat producers



The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission has launched the Southern Maryland Meats (SMM) program to promote the marketing of locally produced meats in southern Maryland counties.

Participating farms raising sheep, goats, cattle, hogs, and poultry, as well as seafood producers in the five counties—Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, and St. Mary's counties—pledge to raise their animals according to the quality and management standards enumerated by SMM. Those approved producers are listed on the program's website and in a published directory.

They also receive SMM promotional point of sale materials, and are eligible to sell their meats at five regional partner stores that host dedicated SMM display cases.

The commission also offers workshops and other educational opportunities are offered to support the SMM livestock community year round.

To learn more about the program and download materials, go to <http://www.southernmarylandmeats.com/index.html>.

The 2018 Virginia Tech Southwest Agricultural Research and Extension Center (AREC) ram test program is set to begin on Tuesday, May 29, with delivery of nominated ram lambs. Nominations are due May 1.

## The purposes of this forage-based ram performance test, conducted in Glade Spring, Virginia, are:

### Parasite-resistant ram test in Virginia

- To provide a standardized post-weaning performance evaluation of growth and parasite resistance, to will furnish records that will be useful to the consignor's breeding program.
- To serve as an educational tool for the sheep industry.

Following the three-week adjustment period, rams will be allocated to test groups and forage paddocks based on age and weight. At the start of the test period all rams will receive an oral dose of *Haemonchus contortus* larva. Weights, fecal egg counts, and FAMACHA scores will be taken at the beginning, during, and at the conclusion of the test period.

Rams participating in the forage-based ram test will be offered for sale.

The 2018 AREC Ram Test Sale and Field Day (educational programs) are set for Friday, September 21.

For more information contact Lee Wright, 276-944-2200 or Scott Greiner, 540-231-9159.

## Marketing Calendar

### Apr. 26

Deadline for RECEIPT of entries in the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival Fleece Show and Sale.

### May 16

Ramadan begins

### June 15

Eid-al-Fitar

### Aug. 22-25

Eid-al-Adha

## Wool pools for Maryland producers

Berks/Chester County Wool Pool  
Morgan Firestine  
1238 County Welfare Road, Ste. 110  
Lees Port, PA 19533  
Phone: 610-378-7961  
Email: maf5002@psu.edu

Bucks-Montgomery Co-op Wool Pool  
Rodney Gilbert  
471 Almshouse Road  
Doylestown, PA 18901  
Phone: 215-489-2247  
Fax: 215-489-2224  
Email: rodney.gilbert@delval.edu

Cumberland Coop Sheep & Wool Growers Association  
Donna Duncan  
1100 Claremont Road  
Carlisle, PA 17013  
Phone: 717-243-8069  
Email: dgd1@psu.edu

Mercer County Coop & Western PA Wool Pool  
Robert Calvert  
735 N Perry Highway  
Mercer, PA 16137  
Phone: 724-475-3119  
Fax: 724-662-1933  
Email: rec5@zoominternet.net

Somerset County Sheep & Wool Growers Wool Pool  
Scott Baer  
718 Geiger Road  
Friedens, PA 15541-8113  
Phone: 814-443-2402  
Fax: 814-445-5162  
Email: sabaer@live.com

Northern Virginia Wool Pool  
Clermont Farm  
801 East Main St.  
Berryville, VA 22611  
Contact: Corey Childs  
cchilds@vt.edu

A local pillar of small farm commerce has closed its gates. On February 1 the Westminster Livestock Auction pounded its gavel for the last time, at least for the foreseeable future.

The auction opened in 1935 on Johns Street in Westminster. It moved to its present location on Route 31 in 1965. There was a fire in 1985, and during rebuilding it was bought by Barb and Jim Starlipper and added to the Tri-State Livestock Auction group. It was sold to Jim Horak in 2004, and a few years later it was bought by Earl and Victoria Gouker.

There followed a period of energy, outreach, and hope. The Goukers seemed to be on track to shift the reliance of the auction from the declining dairy sector in Maryland to smaller cattle operations, sheep and goats, hay, fowl, and small animals, vegetables, and garage-clearing sales.

The importance of the auction to sheep and goat growers was considerable. It was a reliable place to either find the animals you needed or sell the critters you wanted to move. Like all auctions, it was a grab-bag—one never really knew what would show up.

Earl would take your call and give you a report of what was in the pens and what he expected on any given night. He reestablished a rapport with growers and buyers that had lapsed, and worked in the trenches and on the road to encourage the flow of animals and serve the market. The auction had been a 19th-century style institution, and the Goukers were bringing it up to modern times and a shifted agricultural world. Except for the computers and the view screen, the building and atmosphere evoked an earlier time.

Then came the fire.

In the early morning hours of January 8, 2014, an over-charged battery sparked a fire that tore through the office, canteen, and part of the gallery. The scales and pens were spared, but records, paperwork, computers, and other essentials were destroyed.

What followed was a long and frustrating 14-month period of rebuilding. Earl served as his own contractor, and so had to deal with the bank, insurance adjusters, building inspectors, County officialdom, subcontractors, and suppliers...to name a few.

Unique challenges welled up—among them the need to upgrade a 19th century structure to a 21st century building code (a common problem for historic and other old structures following fires). In addition, there seemed to be a desire on behalf of the powers-that-be that the property that the auction sat on be converted



to commercial uses more palatable to suburban sensitivities than the muck and grime of farm commerce. (For crying out loud, it's located next to a sewage treatment plant!) Earl and Victoria were committed to getting the auction running again, so they soldiered on.

The re-opening may have proved a Pyrrhic victory—and the foul weather that marked opening night may have been a foreshadowing of the years ahead. Although the operation got back in service, the 14-month hiatus took a toll. The blood and treasure involved in reconstruction had to be recouped. Reliable livestock workers, always in short supply, were even more difficult to find and employ.

But with construction completed, the gates opened and business began. Animals and attendees returned and the rhythm of the seasons set the auction's wheels in motion. Ironically, the past three months showed greater attendance and more animal traffic than ever since the fire.

So what's a grower or buyer to do? Lambs and goats are appearing on Craig's List more and more. There's the Hagerstown Livestock Auction. Jim and Barb Starlipper still operate it in fine order. It is more oriented toward cattle, then hogs, then goats, and then sheep and lambs. Inconveniently, the small ruminants go into the ring after the other groupings, so it's often 11 p.m. or midnight when they get sold.

The Greencastle Livestock Auction has proved popular with goats, sheep, and lambs. It begins at 6 p.m., and it's been said the pace is quick. Located off of Interstate 81 north of Hagerstown, it's pretty easy to access. It has a good website for information. Jeff Craig owns and operates it.

The New Holland Sales Stables in New Holland, Pennsylvania, is the Big Kahuna. They move tons of animals and have big-league buyers from all the population hubs in the mid-Atlantic region. The prices listed in the newspapers carry

## Westminster Livestock Auction closes

**Peter Austin**

*is an MSBA board member*

*The first auction house, in earlier times. [Image from Westminster Livestock Auction Facebook page]*



weight and authority. But if you've been used to going to Westminster it's like being accustomed to a merry-go-round and then riding bulls at the Wyoming State Rodeo.

Sometimes a grower will get the best price there for the animal, but often your coddled livestock are a drop in a vast fast-moving river of animals. If you're there to buy, you're probably small fry, the auctioneer doesn't know you, and you're competing with the Big Boys.

The Maryland Sheep Breeders Association website holds promise for direct sales, but in the

case of dealing with cull animals, an auction is pretty efficient. Those culls won't end up in a petting zoo, but their future is often brief, direct, and you don't have to apologize for an animal's age or shortcomings. It's rare that an animal is so rough no one wants it.

Will the Westminster Livestock Auction rise again? Who knows? Earl and Vickie threw their heart and soul into it. Everything is there, ready to unlock and reboot.

I appreciate the Goukers' service to the agricultural community, and hope for the best.



Several members of the Maryland and Frederick County Sheep Breeders Associations headed abroad on March 24, 2018. Okay, not

actually abroad, but onto foreign soil. By invitation of the Czech Republic's Embassy, these members participated by providing a petting zoo for the embassy's annual Easter Egg Hunt.

In attendance were Charlotte and Olivia Dutton, who provided goats and rabbits. Judy and Phill Osborn, Nina Scott, and Jayden Lockley were there with rabbits. Patricia Sanville was on site with some very young lambs. Also in attendance were several members of the Alpha

## Frederick fiber folk do Czech Easter event

Alpaca 4-H club with their project animals (plus some tiny rabbits). Rick and Lisa German were responsible for this portion of the group.

The Czech Republic Embassy offered visitors not only the chance to hunt for eggs but also to decorate them in the traditional Czech manner.

The petting area at the Embassy's Christmas market was so popular, embassy staff asked if we would consider an encore. We were happy we could do our part to educate and to entertain.

—Patty Sanville

*Patricia and some very chill lambs relax outside the embassy.*  
[Image by Olivia Dutton]



## 2018 MSBA scholarships offered

The Maryland Sheep Breeders Association in conjunction with the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival is offering two scholarships in the amount of \$500 each to students who have been accepted or are in the process of applying for continuing education at a college, university, or technical/vocational school.

All academic majors will be considered, but priority will be given to agricultural majors and to those applicants who are members or whose families are members of the Maryland Sheep Breeders Association. Payment will be made upon provision of school acceptance documentation and/or evidence of attendance.

All applicants including the winners will be notified by mail. The monetary awards will be made directly into your account at the school you will be attending. You and your family will

be our honored guests at the Annual Maryland Sheep Breeders dinner in October.

Selection criteria:

1. Experience and involvement with the sheep industry (e.g. 4-H, FFA, family business, Make It with Wool, etc.)
2. Industry-compatible career goals
3. Community service activities
4. Leadership and/or extra-curricular involvement
5. Official high school or college transcripts
6. Essay (500 words/topic listed on application)
7. Two letters of recommendation.

Deadline for Submission: July 1, 2018.

Contact Liz Cavey, elizabethcavey@gmail.com, if you have questions.

See page 11 for application form.



## 2018 Scholarship Application

Name and Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone and Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent names: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you or your parent/s current members of MSBA? \_\_\_\_\_

School you plan to attend in the fall of 2018: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of school in the fall of 2018: \_\_\_\_\_

Major area of study: \_\_\_\_\_

High School attended and GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your career plan? \_\_\_\_\_

Please add additional pages to answer the following questions:

1. Explain your experience and involvement in the sheep industry via 4-H, FFA, and/or family business.
2. Explain your career goals and why you have chosen them.
3. Community service (agriculture and non-agriculture related).
4. Leadership/extra-curricular activities (agricultural and non-agricultural related).

Essay question for 2018: (typed, double spaced, maximum of 500 words):

*How has your experience with sheep and/or the sheep industry impacted your life?*

Please return completed applications and letters of recommendation postmarked by July 27, 2018, to:

Elizabeth Cavey  
2640 Marston Road  
New Windsor, MD 21776

Maryland News ▶

The Easter Egg Roll at Rose Hill Manor is an annual tradition for the Maryland and Frederick County Sheep Breeders Associations, and the weather on March 31 was perfect.

MSBA, FCSBA at Rose Hill Manor events

Patty Sanville

is an MSBA board member and president of FCSBA

This was my first year running this event as FCSBA president, and as such I was humbled by the outpouring of assistance from our joint membership. Our youth really stepped up to assist in crowd control and safety. Olivia Scuderi, Laura Dutton, Caroline and Preston Clark, Caroline and Ella McDonald, and Konnor Sowell all showed up to help me out! Olivia brought a friend, Amina Harouna, to help too. Meagan Cronkite brought her children and their 4-H project rabbits. Thank you, Ben, Nathan, and Nicholas Cronkite.

All those extra hands were important, because many kids attend with their parents. What do



Many children crowd around the lambs at Rose Hill.

I mean by many? Imagine a LOT of kids, and then multiply by at least two. The animals and volunteers were all exhausted at the end.

We had a nice collection of animals for attendees to see and touch: goats, lambs (wool and hair), rabbits, and even a chicken.

Thanks to the American Lamb Board, we were able to hand out stickers as well—because who doesn't love a sticker?

FCSBA will be back at Rose Hill Manor in April for the site's Spring Open House, promoting sheep and wool. The event takes place Saturday April 28 (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) and Sunday April 29 (noon to 4 p.m.).

Sheep, lambs, and goats will be on display (as well as other livestock). There will be shearing and spinning demonstrations, and a collaborative, hands-on wagon-wheel rug-making project. Rose Hill Manor Farm is located at 1611 N. Market Street. Volunteers needed!



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The Great Frederick Fair's animal birthing center is looking for ewes due to lamb during this year's fair, September 14–22.

The center is of course popular with fair-goers, and if you have fall lambing ewes, please consult with them to see if they would be

Ewes wanted (the bashful need not apply)

willing to go public with the lambing process (and of course the nursing process—once you've lambed for an audience, you can let it all hang out! Park bench optional!).

If the ewes are amenable, the Frederick Fair contact person for the center is Karen Nicklas. Her personal number is 240-285-1831.

This year's shepherds' seminars include old favorites and new topics.

**Over-the-counter (OTC) Medications & Treatments for Sheep: When and How to Use Which Ones** with Dr. Rosalind Hain. Saturday, May 5, 1:30-2:45 p.m., Dining Hall. *Free*

On the shelves of your favorite farm store you may be faced with a wide array of OTC medications and treatments available for use on your sheep: antibiotics (injectable and ingestible); wound care sprays, ointments & liquids; treatments for scours, pregnancy toxemia, hypocalcemia, vitamin mixes, etc., etc., etc.! How do you decide which to use for what? Which ones should you have in your on-farm arsenal?

Dr. Hain, veterinarian and MSBA Board Member, has 12 years of experience in mixed animal practice in Maryland. Born in South Africa, Dr. Hain has a history of sheep farming on both sides of her family going back more than 100 years. She keeps a flock of Romanov sheep in Frederick, Maryland.

**Shepherd Seminar: Shepherd's Chat** with John Fichtner. Saturday, May 5, 3-4 p.m., Dining Hall. *Free*

John will discuss and take questions about the environmentally restorative benefits of raising sheep. He has been a hill shepherd since 1980, and will draw upon his 40 years of experience teaching forestry at the Roane-Jackson Tech Center in West Virginia. He is a West Virginia Master Naturalist and promotes a regenerative approach, encouraging shepherds to raise animals in concert with environmental balance. The discussion will attempt to share insight, common sense, and production hints that John has absorbed during his long professional tenure as well as his personal shepherding pursuits. John raises Scottish Blackface and Cheviots and employs border collies.

**Basic Shepherding** (for individuals considering getting a sheep flock) with Dr. Richard Barczewski. Friday, May 4, 9 a.m. to noon, Show Ring

This workshop is a must for novice shepherds and for Festival visitors who dream of managing a flock of sheep someday. Dr. Richard Barczewski, associate professor in the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Delaware State University, begins with a discussion on basic sheep handling, selection, and evaluation techniques. To that he'll add sheep health topics including foot trimming, vaccination, and deworming, plus discussions of housing, pasture management, feeding, marketing, parasite control, health care, and recordkeeping. The



workshop includes time for questions, informal discussion, and lots of handouts. Participants who attend will be better prepared to enter this exciting and rewarding hobby/profession. Note: It is strongly suggested that individuals sign up for either the morning or afternoon session of this course based on their background and experience; there is no need to sign up for both.

Class Code: SW01 Class Fee: \$30. 25 Student Maximum.

**Basic Shepherding** (For individuals who already have a sheep flock) with Dr. Richard Barczewski. Friday, May 4, 1-4 p.m., Show Ring

This workshop is a must for beginning shepherds who already have a flock of sheep but are looking for ways to improve management to increase their bottom line. Dr. Barczewski will review some basic sheep handling, selection, and evaluation techniques, and add to that other aspects of a successful sheep operation, including reproductive management and nutrition for maximum productivity, general lambing management and health care concerns, as well as parasite and vaccination options and alternatives. Special emphasis will be placed on marketing and record keeping. The workshop includes lots of time for questions and informal discussion. Participants who attend will learn tips to improve their operations by making them more profitable. Note: It is strongly suggested that individuals sign up for either the morning or afternoon session of this course based on their background and experience; there is no need to sign up for both.

Class Code: SW02 Class Fee: \$30. 25 Student Maximum.



## Shepherds' Seminars

You can register online for the workshops at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-maryland-sheep-wool-festival-tickets-42597357844#tickets>; click on the "tickets" button and scroll way down for the workshops.

OR you can download registration forms for the seminars at <http://sheepandwool.org/2018-festival/shepherd-workshops/>.

**Festival News ▶**

The Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival would not be possible without the support of hundreds of volunteers. Anyone who volunteers ahead of time gets free admission to the Festival and a volunteer shirt, plus a unique souvenir which is *not* available to the general public! If you are a high school student who needs student service learning hours, we can certify those hours.

Have we got a job for you!



Here are some of the ways you can volunteer at the Festival.

**Festival Set-Up** – This always happens on the Sunday before the Festival, which will be April 29, 2018, and includes a pot luck lunch. This is mostly manual labor, like setting up sheep pens.

**During the Festival** – Sometimes we need a helping hand to just carry something or pitch in where needed. We need general volunteers on Saturday and Sunday during Festival hours.

**Do You Love the Festival As Much As We Do?** Come be a friendly, welcoming face as a greeter at the front gate.

**Our Recycling Committee Needs You!** Volunteers are also desperately needed to help our recycling efforts. This is not a glamorous job, as it involves picking out the recyclables that were tossed in with the regular trash. However, it comes with a high satisfaction rating—you have helped the Festival and the planet.

By being vigilant with recycling, in past years we have been able to reduce the number of dumpster loads of trash from five down to three! This might be a solution for keeping a spouse or teenager occupied while you shop.

**Sunday Night Tear Down** – Time to put the Festival back in the box for another year! Young and/or strong arms are especially needed here to help take down the sheep pens. THERE IS A CRITICAL NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS ON SUNDAY NIGHT.

**Retail Sales** - Help with the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival's 2018 retail sales. On Sunday, April 29th, help set up shelving units (and enjoy a potluck lunch); jobs on Wednesday through Friday include folding t-shirts (learn the fine art of using a folding board along the way) plus stocking the shelves with t-shirts and other MSWF merchandise; from Friday afternoon through Sunday afternoon, you can help with sales (no money handling); and from Sunday afternoon into the evening there are take-down tasks.

All work is indoors, on a concrete floor. Every volunteer will receive a Volunteer t-shirt in thanks. Please consider volunteering for take-

down on Sunday after 5 p.m. This is a critical need and many hands make light work. This volunteer work is suitable for teens from a mature 14 years old and up.

Visit <http://sheepandwool.org/participate/volunteer/> and follow the links to the online sign-up pages to volunteer your time.

To our regulars—nice to see you again! To new volunteers: Welcome to the family! —*Kris Thorne*



**New and Noteworthy at the Festival**

(continued from page 1)

weaving, dyeing, basketry, and broom making. Stop by the Folk School Demo Tent throughout the weekend to learn more about the oldest folk school in the United States, and enter to win tuition for a weeklong class of your choice.

• The Breed Display and Parade of Breeds continues to be an amazing part of the Festival, and this year there will be crossbred Swiss Valais Blacknose lambs in the Breed Display Barn, to not only educate on the upbreeding program but to start the education for this breed in general. These are some of the first of these lambs born in the United States. —*Kris Thorne*



Maryland Sheep News is published four times a year by the Maryland Sheep Breeders Association, Inc., and is sent to MSBA members. See back page for membership application.  
**Contact the editor for permission to reprint articles.**

**Ad Rates**

Size	Specs (inches)	Price
Full page	7.5 x 9.5	\$95, \$320/year
Half vert.	3.3 x 9.5	\$60, \$200/year
Half horiz.	7.5 x 4.25	
Third	7.5 x 3	\$45, \$150/year
Quarter	3.3 x 4.25	\$30, \$100/year
Biz card	3.3 x 2	\$15, \$50/year
Classified	230 characters	\$10

Acceptable formats: PDF, jpeg.

**Issue deadlines for ads and copy:**  
 Winter January 10      Summer June 25  
 Spring March 25      Fall October 31

**Send copy to:** **Martha Polkey, Editor**  
 sheep@budiansky.com

**Send payment to:** Treasurer, MSBA  
 1126 Slingluff Road  
 New Windsor, MD 21776

# Maryland Sheep Breeders Association, Inc.

## Officers & Directors

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Maryland Sheep Breeders Association:  
[marylandsheepbreeders.org](http://marylandsheepbreeders.org)

Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival:  
[sheepandwool.org](http://sheepandwool.org)

like us!



The Maryland Sheep Breeders Association Board of Directors meets every other month. Meetings are open to members. For minutes of meetings and meeting dates and times, contact the MSBA Secretary, Angela Muller, [farmallgrl@gmail.com](mailto:farmallgrl@gmail.com).

Join *the*

**MARYLAND SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION**

...and become part of an active organization that sponsors the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival (the premier event of its kind in the nation), Sheep Shearing School, various youth activities, and a variety of educational functions.

*Membership application*  
**MARYLAND SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include me in the MSBA Breeders Directory.

Web URL: \_\_\_\_\_

Breed(s): \_\_\_\_\_ No. Ewes: \_\_\_\_\_

*Send form and \$25 check made payable to MSBA to Kris Thorne, Membership Chair, 1130 Martin Drive, Westminster, MD 21157. She will contact you for additional information for the breeders directory and online profile.*

You can join and pay online at <http://marylandsheepbreeders.org>, and fill out your member profile page. If you prefer to register by mail, fill out the form at left and mail with your \$25 check.

**Here are sponsored events and activities for 2018:**

- April 20–21: Beginning Shearing School
- May 5–6: MD Sheep & Wool Festival
- October 26: Annual Meeting & Dinner

**As a member you will:**

- join an active and friendly community of shepherds.
- receive the quarterly *Maryland Sheep News* and keep up on events, get educational articles, and have a local place to advertise.
- pay a reduced commission on all fleeces sold at the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival Fleece Show & Sale.
- receive free admission to the Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival and be mailed a free copy of the catalog.
- Be eligible for a free listing in the printed MSBA Members Directory and a free profile page on the MSBA website.

Annual membership/subscription fee: \$25. The membership year runs from October through September. Dues for membership received prior to June 1, 2018, will be accepted as paid through September 30, 2018. Dues received on or after June 1 will be accepted as paid through September 30, 2019.